

## VERMONT FAMILY COURT MEDIATION PROGRAM

Referral Guidelines for Judges and court staff  
(Also checklist for parent coordinators)

**Bold= "most appropriate for referral"**

I. When Parent Coordination may be appropriate:

A. What are the contested issues relating to parent/child contact?

- Overnight visits
- Telephone calls
- Visitation exchanges
- Out of state travel
- Contact with third parties
- Visitation interference
- Supervised visits
- Pattern of threats

B. What are the elements of the case? And at least one of the following issues exist

**Allegations of ongoing physical abuse between parents**

- Current relief from abuse order**
- Past relief from abuse order(s)**
- Threats of harm**

**Allegations of serious ongoing emotional abuse**

- Threats of harm**
- Telephone abuse**
- Stalking behavior**
- Child(ren)'s exposure to domestic abuse**

**Allegations of physical/psychological harm to children**

- Sexual abuse**
- Injury to child(ren)**
- Violence toward a family pet**

Mental health issues for parents

- Diagnosed illness involving medication or other treatment

Limited parenting skills

- Allegations of inappropriate discipline
- Neglect of personal care (ie bathing, clothing, etc)
- Poor school attendance by child

Mental health issues for children

- Diagnosed illness involving medication or other treatment
- Individual Educational Plan
- Indications of PTSD

Substance abuse issues

- ❑ Allegations of alcohol or substance abuse
- ❑ DWI record
- ❑ Treatment for alcohol or substance abuse

**Signs of parent/child alienation**

- ❑ **Discussion of court proceedings**
- ❑ **“bad mouthing” the other parent**
- ❑ **False predictions of future relationship**
- ❑ **Lying to the child(dren) about the other parent**
- ❑ **Ongoing court hearings**

Parent Coordination may **NOT** be appropriate

- ❑ When one parent files motions claiming the other parent is not following court orders
- ❑ When either parent lacks either the capacity or the willingness to participate in parent coordination
- ❑ When there are repeated violations of RFA orders
- ❑ When there are continuing threats of violence

NOTE: Parent Coordinators do not make recommendations on parental rights and responsibilities. A temporary or final order for PR&R must be in place prior to ordering Parent Coordination.